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Under the Maple

By

KATHRYN MUNRO

[No. 50]

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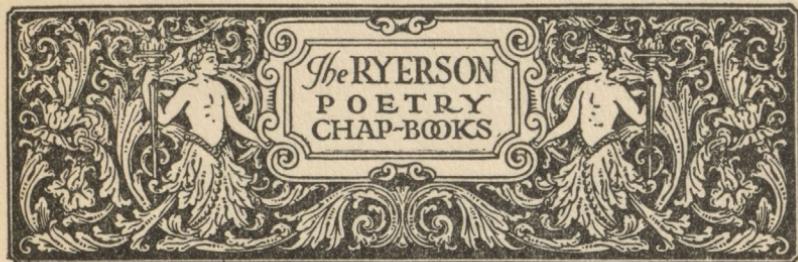
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TO THE MEMORY
of
MY MOTHER

2. C. 2. Shieh,
and "at Chien-tze-tide."
"Dominion
Kingdom
memno.

200000
November 15 - 34.



Under the Maple

By Kathryn Munro

SWEET LAVENDER

HE WAITED patiently outside my door.
Impatiently I came. One errand more—
A pedlar to be hurried on his way . . .
What brings him out on such a bitter day?

He stood before me, shrinking and afraid,
Six feet of manhood utterly dismayed—
Ah, not your gaping glove, your crazy coat,
This poignant fearfulness in you have wrought!

The sullen wind his tattered muffler tore
Aside. He snatched it back, but not before
I saw the sacred cross that battle brings
To him alone who ventures all and flings
His eager gauntlet in War's bloody face,
And strangles Death, who rides with War apace!

He held a little packet out to me.
His baffled eyes sought mine appealingly:
"Please . . . will you buy . . . Sweet Lavender?"
O piteous battle-cry!

False Calendar,
Your decade is an aeon and your day
A footworn century that limps away!

And this was he, a khaki'd demigod,
A very son of Jove, who boldly trod
Through rampant Hell? Speak, Mons and Courcelette,
Grim Passchendaele and Arras! Nor you forget
Him, white-mouthed Vimy!

"From Ypres to Amiens,
While Chaos grew and gorged her swollen maw,
No patriot son met greater odds than he,
And none more chivalrous in victory!"

But now he falters, "Madam . . . will you buy . . .
Sweet Lavender?" O broken battle-cry!

* * *

DUSK

DUSK is the opening bud through which distils,
Slow drop by drop,
The witching essence of the rose of Night—
Deep, lotus-petaled rose,
Whose starry heart with subtle potion fills
A cup to conjure mortal woes and ills,
And brims a chalice for the gods' delight!

But dewy Dusk holds sweeter sorcery.
It breathes of innocence and quiet ways,
Of whispering leaves and dream-enfolded wings,
Of vanished playmates in forgotten days
When life was young,
And many a dear, elusive memory
Of unreturning things.

And when at last my loth, unwilling feet
Must leave this garden for the spectred street,
If I may find within my trembling palm
The tranquil rose of Dusk,
My faring spirit shall be strong and calm!

* * *

THE RAIN AND THE WIND

OHO, HERE comes the jolly Rain
A-tapping on my window-pane!
It trickles from the trembling leaves
And slithers down the oozy eaves;

It travels faster than the Wind—
I know it leaves him far behind,
For I can hear him go “woo-oo”
Long after all the Rain is through.

I love to watch the shining Rain
Go racing down my window-pane!
I love to hear the singing Wind
Come running softly up behind!

And now that I have ventured out
A-past the foaming water-spout,
To fetch my drum which I forgot
This morning in the garden-plot
(The loudest drum that Dad could get),
I find the Rain has left it—wet!
But Mother says that by and by
The Wind will come and make it dry!

* * *

THE DESERTED HOUSE

EMPTY it stands, forsaken, desolate,
The haunt of peering bat and preying owl;
A broken shrine, now wholly desecrate
To alien tenantry that creep and prowl.

Its sightless eyes stare blankly at the moon,
They glean no more the radiance of the morn;
Unblinkingly they meet the blazing noon,
Nor feel the friendly rain, nor winter's scorn.

At either end of the misshapen roof,
A palsied chimney totters to its fall;
Below, a phantom doorway keeps aloof
The stranger who would heed its poignant call.

Yet once within this poor, defeated place
A man and woman toiled and loved and prayed;
Here faith and beauty flourished for a space,
Here happy children on the threshold played.

An eerie wind goes tremulously by,
Forever seeking those for whom it grieves:
“Where have they wandered?” runs its questing cry,
And, sighing, sleeps beneath the whispering eaves.

ALONG THE MIDWAY

AT A great Exhibition,
Held in a beautiful and cultured city,
A large-mouthed man stood on a rough platform
Outside a nondescript building,
In a noise-riden street,
And shouted in a voice, coarse and raucous from long abuse:
"This Way to See the Homeliest Woman in the World!
"Her Face is Her Fortune! Tee-hee!
"The Homeliest Woman in the World! This Way to See—"

I went inside with the jostling, curious crowd.
We followed each other, one by one,
Around a low enclosure of wooden slabs.

There, in a far corner, like one condemned,
She sat in brooding silence, half-crouched, alone.
Her garments were the trappings of a scarecrow. . . .

A sullen air, tense, mutinous, unutterable,
Filled the place.
It struck one in the face.
It laid lean, phantom fingers at one's throat
And squeezed its hatred of rapacious man
Into one's brain and body,
Filling the senses with unholy fear. . . .

Her eyes were lustreless and cold,
But for the glint of madness, like live sparks on a grey hearth
Ambushed behind her long-enduring gaze. . . .
None but the callous could presume
More than a furtive glance.

Ah, where for her those spirit-healing things:
Gold-bannered dawn and high, triumphant noon;
Rose-hooded twilight; stir of nesting wings;
A sleeping garden and a crescent moon;
A singing hearth-fire on a winter's night;
The feel of baby fingers in her hair;
The friendship of good women; and the right
To follow beauty, always, everywhere!

Can Heaven itself my sister's loss atone?
For here she lives in Hell, dismayed, alone!

ST. BRIGID'S

(In the Parish of Gagetown, in the Province of New Brunswick, there stands a little Roman Catholic chapel, just off the highway, its white simplicity softly limned against a grove of great, beautiful pines.)

A HOUSE of God beside a lovely wood,
Soul's haven by the travel-weary road;
Here it were very easy to be good,
Here, unremembered, leave the pilgrim's load.

Snow-white it stands before a shining glade,
A silver etching on a shield of green,
And wind or weather, sun or sombre shade,
But brings new vesture to the hallowed scene.

Within, the saints their wonted vigil keep;
The Virgin Mother clasps the Holy Child;
His Table there is spread; and calm and deep
The peace of Him, the Merciful and Mild.

The birds in summer nest beneath its eaves,
Safe sanctuary there from every ill;
And through the summer night enchanted weaves
The vibrant fluting of the whip-poor-will.

Here beauty tarries hand in hand with prayer,
Where singing pines their fragrant ministry
Forever yield to the unsullied air,
Chanting a low, perpetual psaltery.



SEPTEMBER

WITH burnished crest and bannered spear,
The autumn's heralds now appear.

Then come, my own, and walk with me
Where beauty fashions ecstasy!

The sun, a leisured gallant, lingers
To kiss his lady's palms and fingers;

And wizardry invades the skies,
Like dawning love in sinless eyes.

To-day the angels drape anew
God's footstool with a rarer blue,

And smile to see the cloudlets pass
Like snowy swans upon the grass—

Slow, glacier clouds that part in rifts,
And clouds like cherry-blossom drifts. . . .

Will you, my own, with me remember
The blossom drifts of late September?

* * *

ROSES, DO YOU GRIEVE WITH ME?

ROSES, red roses, do you grieve with me
That one of your fair sisterhood lies dead?
Roses, red roses, do you look to see
Why thus she hangs her once so lovely head?

Tell me, red roses, know you how she fared
While your sweet eyes were sealed against the night?
When none but loneliness her vigil shared,
Felt you no anguish for the darling's plight?

So still she lay beside your mossy bowl,
By some unwitting hand plucked carelessly—
Oh, do the stately Canterburys toll
Their faery bells for lost Anemone?

Ah, sweet your grief, red roses, and your tears
Are cupped within a chalice rare and deep;
And it may be that, listening, she hears
Your muted sighs across her trancèd sleep!

* * *

MOTHER

WITHIN the deep recesses of my heart
There blooms a little garden, rare and sweet,
And in that sanctuary set apart
I tend a lillied shrine—an office meet
For one who gave me life and faith and love.
And when I thither go, as oft I do,
To tell my rosary of thanks to you,
I feel your smile upon me from above.

For death-enduring agonies of birth,
For patient understanding through the years,
For virtue, honour, fortitude from fears,
I am the debtor, I, of little worth. . . .
But on that altar, builded just for you,
The flowers are always fresh with heaven's dew!



SUMMER MORNING IN QUEBEC

AT STIR of dawn the happy land awakes.
Here folks are up to greet the rising sun,
For there are countless duties to be done
Before his glamorous farewell he takes.
The children, too, from sleepy cots arise
And with the flowers open starry eyes,
For they have little Aves they would tell
In answer to the neighbouring convent-bell.

Before the questing bee his breakfast sips
From drowsy cloverhead or trembling rose;
Before the tallest tree its shadow dips,
The farmer to his cherished acres goes.
At home his wife bends to her daily tasks,
Nor more, nor less, of happiness she asks.



THE LONELY QUEST

TO-DAY the April sky is blue
From heaven's rim to rim,
But for a faery cloud in view
Upon the western brim—
So like some lonely spirit-child
Just wandered from the Presence mild,
Some earth-remembering babe that stands
With brooding heart and suppliant hands.

A child who missed its mother there,
Up in that holy place,
Has come a-questing for her where
It knew her tender face?

And will He bring it back again
Within His love-lit fold,
And shelter it from wind and rain,
From sun and winter's cold?

Ah, yes, where'er His lambs may stray,
There the Good Shepherd finds His way!

¶ ¶ ¶

RED MOON

HA, RED MOON, grinning in the sky,
Trailing dusty cobwebs like an angry fly!
Oh, I'm the wily spider who has you in his net—
Ha! ha! the cunning spider—O God, let me forget
The lad's bewildered eyes! Dear eyes that used to look
So young and merry when I closed his English book
And, tired of study in those happy yesterdays,
We followed beckoning paths and quiet woodland ways.

A strong and deep affection soon between us grew.
We talked of many things; of wonders old and new;
Of truth and beauty; and the savagery of strife;
And of the Nazarene, who taught the Way of Life.
Teacher and pupil we, but each so like the other
In word and thought that once I called him, "Little brother,"
At which he smiled—"But I'm not as wise as you."
Alas, that impious Force should human souls undo!

The earth was staring dizzy with a bloody thirst,
For men were filled with hatred—Creation was accurst.
The muttered word came down the trench, "Show no mercy!"
"Kill! Show no mercy! Kill! Show no mercy!"
"Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!" Ah, soon
Would come the frightened dawn, Red Moon,
And, with abhorring eyes, search out each piteous sight
From which you fled ashamed on that unhallowed night!

Then in that mad inferno I met him face to face,
And I remembered later, across a blinding space,
The sudden joyous greeting in his weary eyes—
He knew I loved him well, this youth of high emprise!

Ten

But I recalled him not, for Hell came on apace. . . .
I drove the Devil's razor to its deadly place!
The Sergeant-Major taught us well the evil trick—
Drive the bayonet home, then turn it double-quick!

His helmet fell away. The little dawn-winds came
And gently touched his hair. . . . I knelt and sobbed his
name.

“*Behüte Dich Gott, mein Freund*”—“God keep you safe, my
friend,”
He whispered, brokenly. . . . “God keep you safe, my
friend!”

Hello, white-jacket. Lights out, you say?
Oh, stick the damned needle in your own wrist!
His face dripped beads of sweat there on the lifeless clay;
I knelt beside him in the mud and, sobbing, kissed
His forehead. . . . I couched his head against my breast
He said, “God keep you safe, my friend,” and feebly pressed
His face to mine. . . . I say, white-jacket, can
You spare a fag? No? . . . Could he be dead so soon!
So soon! . . . Well, *bonne nuit*, nursie man!
Toodle-oo, Red . . . Moon, Red . . . Moon!



TINSEL

AGAIN the world turns toward Bethlehem,
Again the wise are guided by a Star,
Bringing their jewels for His diadem,
While foolish ones stand wistfully afar—
Stand wistfully afar and wonder why
Their vagrant hearts should feel a sudden pain,
Or that a deep, unutterable cry
Should rise to cleave their mimic joy in twain.

But yet I think He loves the foolish ones
More tenderly than He regards the wise;
As earthly parents yearn for erring sons,
So the All-Father from His paradise
Broods over us in all our waywarding,
Forbearing with us and our gods of clay,
And smiles with understanding when we bring
Our bits of tinsel for His natal day!

THE YEAR'S AWAY

THE YEAR goes out.

A tempest-ravaged, cargo-laden barque
That slips her moorings in the soundless dark,
With Time, a wizened seaman, at her prow,
Leaving behind the land of Here and Now,
She turns about.

The year has gone.

A weary ship that trails her shattered log
Far oceanward through gloom and gathering fog;
By unrelenting tides and stubborn breeze
Borne ever onward over alien seas,
To ports unknown.

The year's away.

And what have I and what have you on board?
Kind thoughts, fair deeds, tied up with friendly cord?
For well we know, whatever they may be,
They will come back again to you and me,
Another day!

* * *

GHOSTS

WHY DO old buried hopes,
Like troubled spirits, bowed and sorrowing,
Bearing dead tapers in their suppliant hands,
Come back unbidden to my foolish heart?
They enter through a dim, dismantled corridor,
To a door sealed and barricaded from within.
There they stand and knock,
With low, persuasive tenderness,
Upon the silent portal.

I pretend not to hear.

I shut them out from every throbbing sense—
I am deaf, dumb, blind, pitiless;
I swear they are strangers, intruders,
Undeserving and unlicensed beggars,
Aliens smuggled over the ramparts of my soul.

All this I whisper fiercely to myself,
Trembling within my sealed and barricaded room . . .
But still they knock and knock,
Gently, patiently, persistently—
For well they know my secret hiding-place,
Dear, death-defying, love-begotten ghosts!

* * *

PLAYMATES

THEY lived in the same neighbourhood,
And went nut-gathering in the high, gloomy woods
On Saturdays.
She was nine when he was ten.

One day they quarrelled.
She was sitting at the foot of a great, mossy beech.
He pulled a square of tobacco—his father's—from his pocket
And, with his stubby jack-knife,
Moved the "tin heart" back.
Then, with grubby fingers, he cut off a narrow strip,
Which he shredded and mixed with dry moss
From the tree by which she sat.

He took an old T.D. from a junk-burdened pocket
And, pressing a grimy thumb into the white clay bowl,
Packed it laboriously, watching her the while.
Then he struck a match on the toe of his patched shoe
And drew long, fragrant puffs with assumed relish.

She threatened to tell his father (for conscience' sake),
But he said, awkwardly,
"I know you won't tell."
So, how could she?

Suddenly, emptying his funny pipe against a warty log,
He filled her pockets with fat brown nuts.

On their way home, along the wild-brier path,
Her arm caught on a bush.
He released it gently, patiently extracting
A multitude of thorns.

Still pals, they both grew up.

But life divided them.

To-day, across the estranging years,
A foreign news-item, seen by chance,
Tells of his lonely passing
Along the uncompanied spirit-trail!



THE CROOKED PINE

“**T**HE OTHER trees are straight and fair,”
Complained the crooked pine;
“When I myself with them compare,
What misery is mine!

“Their plumy heads are lifted high
On trunks erect and green,
While I am fashioned quite awry,
Of dwarfed, misshapen mien.

“Ah, did some serpent writhe to strike
The hand that planted me?
Or some dread spirit, Durga-like,
Invoke this treachery?”

Just then the wind came from the west
And kissed the crooked tree;
“Dear pine, you know I love you best,”
It whispered, soothingly.

“For you are made, O harp of jade,
For melodies divine;
No other voice within the glade
Is half so sweet as thine!”

A tired traveller now came by,
“I'll rest me here,” he said;
“This pine tree's shade is deep and I
Shall have a fragrant bed!”

Then let us not our gifts despise,
Like this unhappy tree;
We may be neither fair nor wise,
Yet loved and useful be.

THE SNOW SOLDIER

I MUCH prefer the weather cold,
I fear this glaring sun;
For I was made a soldier bold,
A doughty grenadier of old,
And what I have I ought to hold—
But now I want to run!

The little folk for whom I guard
This foe-beleaguered spot,
Gave me a helmet and a sword,
Beribboned me like any lord,
And belted me with crimson cord—
But now the sun is hot!

Mine is, indeed, an urgent case,
I'm feeling very blue;
My sword is slipping from its place,
I hear I've got a funny face,
My legs, I know, are a disgrace—
Oh, what am I to do?

Ah, there is one my fate can stay,
I'll wireless him to hurry:
Good Sergeant Frost, make no delay,
Bring up your troopers right away,
If you would save me, come to-day—
My sight is growing blurry!

Alas, my tears are uncontrolled,
The sun has made me tender!
But I am still a soldier bold,
A doughty grenadier of old,
And what I have I ought to hold—
I'll melt, but won't surrender!



THE SCARE-CROW MAN

THE SCARE-CROW MAN stands in a field,
Swinging his arms all day;
I think he finds it lonely there,
And beckons me to play.

The hired man says it isn't so,
That Scare-Crow's very busy,
And isn't fond of playing games—
Now, isn't he, or is he?

He says that Scare-Crow minds the corn
All day and through the night,
And doesn't get a wink of sleep—
Do *you* think that is right?

Last evening when I'd gone to bed,
I tiptoed up again,
And saw him through my window,
Standing in the grain.

The moon was shining softly
Upon his ragged hat,
But he didn't wave his hand—
He seemed too tired for that.

I think I'll say this little prayer
For him each night and morn:
"Dear God, please send the Scare-Crow Man
Sweet sleep among the corn!"

* * *

THE MUD-PIE SPEAKS

I MET a jolly Mud-Pie
Sitting in the sun;
"I'm glad that I'm a Pie," said he,
"It's really lots of fun!"

"And though I may be humble,
Please tell the world for me
That I am never dull or sad,
But happy as can be.

"For children here and everywhere,
Through many a summer day,
Sit down to Make-Believe with me,
And this is what we play:

"That cockleshells are apple-rings,
And pebbles really berries,
And small, round stones are plums, of course,
To little folk and fairies.

"They tell me in a whisper
The kind of Pie I am—
Oh, cherry, plum, or strawberry,
Or apple-tart with jam.

"Whatever I'm supposed to be,
I'm happy to be that—
My joy is feeling little hands
Go pit-a-pit-a-pat!"

* * *

SWEET PEAS IN A CLAY BOWL

AH, HERE is beauty wed to comeliness!
Rare blossoms couched within an earthen bowl,
Shedding the aura of their loveliness
Before the tranced eyelids of the soul.

On folded wings, like dying butterflies,
Of dusky gold and amethyst and blue,
They pause upon their flight to Paradise
To greet in passing such as me and you.

* * *

BLACK RIVER

(Sutton, Ontario)

ALL SUMMER long you beckon to the breeze,
Who, with the sun, brings myriad silver butterflies
To dance upon your breast.
Tireless they dance, while you laugh joyously!
Till, moodily, you flee, driven by sudden passion,
Swirling and writhing in an angry fashion,
To meet a towering man-made palisade
Whose height you take with thundering fusilade!

Then on and on, until at length,
With many a daring gesture,
You reach a cloistered steep,
Where lusty reeds wade deep,

Flashing jade lances on the trancèd air.
There amorously you rest,
While drowsily the hour-glass spills its winnowed sand
Into the day's laxed hand.

Now, love-replete, you pass, with gentle sighs,
Deep-wooded banks where virgin trilliums bloom
And noiseless shuttles weave and interweave
Their lacy patterns on a faery loom.
Here timid creatures come and drink of you,
Calling you, "Sweet, thrice sweet, Arcadian dew!"

But ah! when summer ends
And winter's bloodless hand descends
Upon your racing pulses,
Then I, knowing your gipsy heart,
Your soul of Araby,
Shall pity you, my beautiful Black River!

• • •

FALLEN LEAVES

BORNE on a whispered sigh,
The leaves come down,
The timid, trembling leaves,
Each lovely face turned upward to the sky.

Forgotten now the challenge of the morn
That sang across the fields of tasselled corn!

The age-enduring sun,
The regnant moon,
Those vigilants, the stars,
For you no more their cosmic benison.

But in the dark when little night-winds creep,
You stir and listen in your dreamless sleep.

BESIEGED

MY HEART is a flaming wood,
Fenced by a famished river
Whose girdling pulses, cool and sweet,
Have ceased their dewy beat.

White tongues of fire,
Torched by outlawed Desire,
And fanned by a pitiless wind,
Devour the quivering leaves
And turn the fragrancy of blooms
Into dull, scentless fumes.

But deep within the ravished glade,
Beneath a shielding cypress there,
With suppliant hands, a sinless maid,
A holy light on brow and hair,
Stands in perpetual prayer.
Calm, unafraid, untouched is she—
Her name is Chastity!



THE HAUGHTY SNOWFLAKE

THE SNOWFLAKES, in a merry mood,
Came tumbling through the air;
They chased each other round and round,
Like fairies on enchanted ground,
Then with a little sighing sound
They settled here and there.

But one was proud and came alone
Along a tilted sunbeam;
He rode within his crystal car,
From lesser folk he steered afar
And dazzled like a falling star
The eyes of those about him.

Ah, but how sad it is to learn
The fate of one so vain!
That haughty snowflake thought, I fear,
That naught could stay his brave career—
Until he melted in a tear
Upon my window-pane!



TRYST

ALL TENDER, wistful things bring thoughts of you:
Dream-haunted music; eager wings in flight;
Chaste, love-begotten gardens drowsed in dew;
The little, lonely orphaned winds of night
That seek their comfort from the mothering trees;
The pulsing twilight star that woos the west,
Burning its beauty in courageous quest—
Of you, dear heart, of you, speak such as these.

And where I walk, there you are journeying:
Along the sun-beleaguered crest of noon,
Or through dim valleys where the masked moon
Calls truant gods to gypsy revelling;
Or glad, or sad, wherever I may be,
Your spirit keeps high rendezvous with me!



PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

HERE the St. Lawrence on its mighty way
Holds converse with the nations of the world;
Trois Rivières, the lovely Saguenay,
And many others lesser tribute pay
To keep our flag of commerce far unfurled.

A province old in custom, rich in lore,
Gracious in manners, bred in courtesy,
A land of beauty with an ageless store—
A priceless heritage of virgin ore—
Hidden within its earthbound treasury.

A peaceful people, patient, wise and gay,
Happy at home, illustrious abroad;
Heirs to Marquette, children of Joliet,
Of Frontenac, Montcalm and Cartier,
Born to tradition and a faith in God.

Such great inheritors must greatly find
Their destined rôle within our nationhood,
And bring a broadening fellowship of mind
To meet the creeds and customs of our kind
In closer kinship for our common good.

* * *

THE BREADMAKERS

(In a large city bakery)

MEN, WHITE-GARBED, grey-lipped, and giant-limbed;
Men, pallid-faced, with brows and lashes rimmed,
Frost-pencilled, with the dust of powdered wheat;
Men, making bread for hungry mouths to eat!

Great-bellied ovens, ringed with liquid fire,
Drawn from the mothering earth's pleonic pyre,
In answer to her children's ceaseless cry
Of "Bread! More bread! Oh, feed us, or we die!"

Here stood a man, a slave to dull routine,
Whose gaze was fixed on one unchanging scene,
Placing on moving pans—a mimic train—
Round lumps of dough, forever and again!

Another, here, whose hands were sure and strong,
The fingers of a surgeon, pliant, long;
His face betrayed his dream—a gallant mask
Worn as a shield against the daily task.

And there a youth whose eyes of azure-grey
Were proudly eloquent. He seemed to say,
"Your pardon, but it were a grave mistake
To think I haven't brains because I bake.

"Does dropping doughnuts into boiling fat
Mean that a fellow can do only that?
Truth is, that while one tends a pot of grease,
One's spirit may achieve its Golden Fleece."

Men, white-garbed, grey-lipped, and giant-limbed;
Men, pallid-faced, with brows and lashes rimmed,
Frost-pencilled, with the dust of powdered wheat;
Men, making bread for hungry mouths to eat!



CANADA

HOW DEAR to us our Homeland of the North,
Whose hallowed soil has brought a nation forth!
How blest thy name, most beautiful and free,
Fair Canada, the hope of years to be!

From the Atlantic's deep-resounding shore,
Whose battlements our fathers reared of yore,
To the Pacific's sun-embroidered coast,
Canadian-born is our unsullied boast!

If strong our faith in thy predestined might,
Eager our hands to fashion thee aright,
And swift our feet upon thy errandry,
True children then and only then are we!

Thy statutes ours to keep from age to age,
As thy great bounties are our heritage;
Thy honour ours to guard from sea to sea,
For God, for Home, and for Posterity!



*CRUSADERS OF THE AIR

(Aviation Hymn)

The Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the
everlasting arms.—*Deuteronomy 33: 27.*

O THOU within whose sure control
The surging planets onward roll,
Whose everlasting arms embrace
The sons of every clime and race:
Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
For these Thy Children of the Air!

*Tune, *Melita*

Thou, at the impulse of whose will
A troubled Galilee grew still,
Thy chart and compass shall provide
Deliverance from storm and tide:
Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
For these Thy Rangers of the Air!

Across the ocean dread and deep,
Above the forest's lonely sweep,
Or when through serried clouds they rise
And hidden are from mortal eyes:
Hear Thou, O Lord, a nation's prayer
For Thy Crusaders of the Air!

Uphold their shining argosies
Upon the vast ethereal seas;
Encompass Thou their valiant wings
In all their brave adventurings:
Hear this, O Lord, a nation's prayer
For these Thy Children of the Air! Amen.



REQUIEM

(Dedicated to the memory of Lieut.-Col. W. G. Barker, V.C.)

NOW SLEEPS the dauntless in a quiet place,
Who lately traversed the uncharted skies;
Who with the light of triumph on his face,
Scanned height and depth with calm, intrepid eyes.

Forgotten now the challenge of the quest
Through wind-swept spaces on a shoreless sea;
From cloudy pinnacle and surging crest
He turns again to earth's tranquility.

Sleep well, brave heart, nor fear the lonely flight
Your soul must take upon its homeward way;
His love shall beacon you throughout the night
And lead you upward into radiant day.

Within the shelter of His brooding wings
Your faring spirit shall find sweet repose;
Harboured at last from storm and vigilings,
Safe in His bosom at the journey's close!

"Does dropping doughnuts into boiling fat
Mean that a fellow can do only that?
Truth is, that while one tends a pot of grease,
One's spirit may achieve its Golden Fleece."

Men, white-garbed, grey-lipped, and giant-limbed;
Men, pallid-faced, with brows and lashes rimmed,
Frost-pencilled, with the dust of powdered wheat;
Men, making bread for hungry mouths to eat!

* * *

CANADA

HOW DEAR to us our Homeland of the North,
Whose hallowed soil has brought a nation forth!
How blest thy name, most beautiful and free,
Fair Canada, the hope of years to be!

From the Atlantic's deep-resounding shore,
Whose battlements our fathers reared of yore,
To the Pacific's sun-embroidered coast,
Canadian-born is our unsullied boast!

If strong our faith in thy predestined might,
Eager our hands to fashion thee aright,
And swift our feet upon thy errandry,
True children then and only then are we!

Thy statutes ours to keep from age to age,
As thy great bounties are our heritage;
Thy honour ours to guard from sea to sea,
For God, for Home, and for Posterity!

* * *

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